

**RIDGEFIELD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**  
**Sunday, January 9, 2022**  
**The Keeler Tavern Museum**  
**152 Main Street, Ridgefield, CT 06877**

Policy: Historic District Commission meetings will be conducted under Roberts Rules of Order and all participants are expected to conduct themselves with dignity and treat all those present with respect, empathy and civility.

**APPROVED MINUTES**

A special meeting and site visit was held at the Keeler Tavern Museum, 152 Main Street, Ridgefield CT, which was open to the public, on Sunday, January 9 2022, at 11:00 a.m.

Present: Dan O'Brien, Briggs Tobin, Rhys Moore, Sean O'Kane, Harriet Hanlon, Kathleen Daughters (Alternate for Sean O'Kane)

**AGENDA**

The purpose of the site visit and special meeting was to view several proposed changes to the property's grounds and campus and consider the Applicant's proposal thereof as follows:

- 1. Removal and relocation of existing stone walls between Visitors' Center and the Museum;**
- 2. Addition of brick walkways and Belgium block driveway aprons;**
- 3. Repositioning of steps on northwest front corner of Visitors' Center;**
- 4. Demolition of existing garage behind Visitors' Center;**
- 5. Provision for additional parking;**
- 6. Relocation of existing historic post office structure; and,**
- 7. Additional entrance on cottage behind the Museum**

The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 11:00 a.m.

Ms. Hildegard Grob, Executive Director was present from the Keeler Tavern Museum. Mr. Don Sturges of Sturges Bros. Inc. was present as the contractor. Mr. O'Kane presented on behalf of the Keeler Tavern Museum and recused himself from the Commission decision on the application. A large scale updated proposed plan board were presented to the HDC Commission members.

Mr. Sturges said they would be planting screening along the property line as they were sensitive to the neighbor's views. They were looking at adding more Maple trees if needed.

**Removal and relocation of existing stone walls between Visitors' Center and the Museum**

Mr. O'Kane indicated that the stone wall between the Visitors' Center and the Museum was to be taken down and that the stonework would be repurposed elsewhere on the property.

**Addition of brick walkways and Belgium block aprons**

Mr. O'Brien asked if the current brick Visitors' Center entrance would be the same type of brick to be used throughout the Campus for the proposed new brick walkways. Ms. Grob said yes. There would be additional brick walkways to allow visitors to safely walk throughout the Campus. The members walked north to the proposed expanded vehicle entrance. Mr. O'Kane measured the current vehicle entrance and showed the Commission members how the proposed widening of the driveway would appear. He said the total width would be 20 ft. This vehicle entrance would be a two way – in and out. Mr. O'Brien asked if the width was as wide as St. Stephens Church. Mr. O'Kane said St. Stephens was 24 ft. This was the only major curb cut change. The other two curb cut entrances would remain as is. The proposed changes include added Belgium block aprons on each of the three driveways. Mr. Sturges said the standard was 24 ft. but they were going ahead with 20 ft. He also indicated that the proposed curb cut was subject to State approval.

**Addition of steps on northwest front corner of Visitors' Center**

At the Northwest front corner of the building, Mr. Sturges pointed out where they proposed to reposition the steps which would be joined by a new stone retaining wall running straight towards Main Street. This new retaining wall would use the stonework taken down from the side of the Visitors' Center.

**Demolition of existing garage behind Visitors' Center**

Walking back towards the parking area, Mr. O'Kane pointed out the garage that was going to be demolished and replaced with additional gravel parking. Ms. Grob pointed out the other building east of the garage which would remain. Both structures were built in the 1980's and were not historical buildings.

**Provision for additional parking**

Walking towards the Keeler Museum, Ms. Grob pointed to where the new loading zone would be located.

Turning towards the back of the property, Mr. Sturges stated that the stone wall on the left with the Rhododendrons would remain. Any dead trees would be removed. Mr. O'Kane said at the end of the wall garden, was the proposed juncture of the two driveways. To the north of the carriage barn, additional proposed parking was shown.

**Relocation of existing historic post office structure**

Ms. Grob pointed out the old post office structure on the property. She said the Ridgefield Historic Society was still exploring the possibility of taking possession of it. As the Keeler Tavern's plans progressed, they would relocate it temporarily on the property. Mr. O'Brien said that placement was subject to HDC approval.

Ms. Grob indicated that the original driveway to the south of the Museum was intended to become less active. Mr. Tobin asked about the timing of all the work. Ms. Grob said they were hoping for some time in 2022. Mr. Sturges said the construction would be staged, with sections at a time to minimize event interruption.

**Additional entrance on cottage behind the Museum**

Ms. Grob pointed out the cottage which they planned to have renovated to provide for public bathrooms and a gift/snack shop. Definitive plans have not been finalized and so the Applicant will return to the HDC Commission at a later date with the detailed proposal.

Mr. O'Brien noted that the following items would remain open and subject to future presentation of plans by the Applicant and consideration by the Commission:

1. Lighting plans
2. Signage plans
3. Placement of the old post office on the property
4. Cottage renovation plans

**Ms. Daughters moved and Mr. Tobin seconded a motion to approve the application as presented for the proposed changes to the Keeler Tavern's property's grounds and campus as follows: 1) Removal and relocation of existing stone walls between Visitors' Center and the Museum, 2) Addition of brick walkways and Belgium block driveway aprons, 3) Repositioning of steps on northwest front corner of Visitors' Center, 4) Demolition of existing garage behind Visitors' Center, and 5) Provision for additional parking. Motion passed 5-0.**

**Ms. Hanlon moved and Mr. Moore seconded a motion to adjourn the Historic District Commission Meeting at 11:47 a.m. Motion passed by unanimous vote.**

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy L. Fields  
Recording Secretary